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THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD

MISSIONS

Has Christianity a Rival in the Far East?

In the July edition of the *International Review of Missions* President Henry Churchill King of Oberlin College writes on "Christianity the Only Hopeful Basis for Oriental Civilization," answering the question: Does any other religion than Christianity give promise of being able to furnish a sufficient spiritual basis for civilization in the Orient, even in its most advanced nation, Japan? In other words: In the increasing contacts between East and West and under the constant pressure of Western education can the earlier religious bases of oriental civilizations suffice or even continue? This is a problem, not of the absolute religion, but one of which many oriental leaders themselves deeply feel the seriousness. There is need of an adequate spiritual basis for an enduring and progressive national life, for a nation's historical and scientific and ethical findings cannot be always at war with its religious beliefs. No modern nation, with the present unifying of the world, can rest in a religion that contains no possibility of becoming universal. The religion that is to meet the needs of the Orient, and especially of Japan, in the crisis brought on by forced contact with Western civilization must be that religion which is best able to meet these new tests of the scientific spirit and method, and of historical criticism, and of the social consciousness. What are the probabilities that any religion other than the Christian can meet this need? Can any of the older faiths do it? Can a modern syncretism do it? No religion, certainly, is going to furnish a safe spiritual basis for a nation's life that cannot command the whole-hearted intellectual and moral respect of its educated leaders. Neither Shinto nor Confucianism

is strictly a religion—at best but a system of ethics, and a system of ethics, moreover, rather narrowly conceived; a religious basis for national life these cannot give. Buddhism, pessimistic, other-worldly, and anti-secular in its ideals, must remain unnaturalized in any truly modern civilization. Further than this, historical criticism and modern science would leave but little of its traditions and its world-view and would deal mercilessly with its abandonment of original Buddhism. A religious syncretism which some earnest Japanese leaders are seeking would lack the essential vitality of an organic growth. It were far wiser for the Japanese to build deliberately and thoughtfully on historical Christianity and give it an honest Japanese interpretation. Christianity has amply proved its ability not merely to exist in the modern world and not merely to adjust itself to such a world, but to furnish foundation, motives, standards, and ideals indispensable to any enduring civilization. Born in the East, embraced in the West, it is the best that the West has to offer to the East. The great facts of the world are the great persons of the world. Christianity's greatest riches lie just here; in the life and teaching and personality of Jesus it has a matchless claim on the attention of thoughtful men seeking a real religious basis for their own lives and for their nation's civilization. Christianity welcomes the light of modern science with its passion for reality; it welcomes all the justified methods and findings of historical criticism and uses these to its own great advantage; it finds in the social consciousness and the true democracy to which it looks the very essence of the spirit of the teaching of Jesus. The real roots of the best in Western civilization are Christian.

This is what is really offered Japan for the spiritual basis of its civilization. With her own honest reaction on the facts of historical Christianity and in the resulting interpretation of its own Christianity, profiting by all that other men have felt that they have found, Japan could scarcely fail to find a satisfying spiritual basis for her individual and national life. She would be choosing the best that the world has to offer.

What the Revolution Means to Chinese Christianity

Dr. Richard Wilhelm, a missionary of the Allgemeiner Evangelisch-Protestantischer Missionsverein in Shantung contributes to the October *International Review of Missions* a noteworthy article on "The Influence of the Revolution on Religion in China." The result of the revolution is the collapse of Confucianism as a state religion. The only legitimate approach to God permitted by Confucian teaching is through the emperor, annually performing sacrifices at the altar of heaven on behalf of the people. But the republican government has abolished the sacrifices and all official veneration of Confucius. Even the study of the Confucian writings has been eliminated from the curriculum of lower and middle schools. The private schools in which the teaching of Confucianism might have been continued have been closed. Further, the official privileges once granted to Buddhism and Taoism have been withdrawn. Disciples of these faiths must accept the status of ordinary associations if they desire governmental recognition. Accordingly a Buddhist church and a Taoist church have already organized with detailed constitutions. The Christian church is no longer at any disadvantage as compared with other religious bodies. It follows that the national consciousness of the Christians has been quickened and love of country has become a large factor in Chinese Christianity. There is a dis-

position everywhere in the Chinese church to refuse to submit to the control of missionaries. An independent national Chinese church is in process of formation. What influence will these movements have upon the spread of Christianity in China? May not the Chinese attempt too soon to dispute with foreign help? Will churches which have hitherto drawn their adherents mainly from the uneducated masses succeed in winning the support of the cultured classes? Can it, unaided, obtain educated leaders of spiritual power? Dr. Wilhelm's deliberate conclusion is this: "We are justified in believing that Christianity in China is already sufficiently strong to maintain itself even if foreign support were withdrawn. Moreover the revolution has brought about conditions which are exceedingly favorable for its expansion."

What Religion Ought Japan to Have?

The dean of the theological department of Doshisha University, Kyoto, Japan, Professor Hino, sets forth in the September number of the *Missionary Review of the World* his reasons for answering with a strong affirmative the question "Ought Japan to Become a Christian Nation?" He writes from full sympathy with the native religions of that empire. He states his assurance that amid all the varying religions of the present day in his country the principle of the survival of the fittest will surely hold true and that the fate of Christianity will be determined by its ability to assimilate the spiritual and intellectual status of the people and to enlighten the nation in the way of truth. The chief religions which today dispute the field with Christianity are three: Shinto, Confucianism, and Buddhism.

As to the religion of Shinto, its weakness lies in its naïve and unorganized character, its narrow and superficial appeal to patriotism as the mainspring of action, its multiplication of weak and puny deities

which results practically in general skepticism and religious indifference. All of these characteristics render Shinto a religion which never can command men of education and serious mind. An infant's dress is useless for a full-grown man.

A better case can be made out for Confucianism, to which, without a doubt, Japan owes much, because of its high insistence on righteousness and the sense of honor. But the appeal here is made to an essentially feudal form of life which has passed—a graded society; but new rights of the common man and of the common woman cannot be thus overlooked. Further, there is nothing in Confucianism to meet the peoples' yearning after eternal values, and this fact has left it unable to hold the Japanese people. Indeed as an institution Confucianism has passed out of the national life.

In Buddhism is to be found, next to Christianity, the best-developed religion in the world. But its appeal is essentially negative, contemplative, static, and deeply pessimistic. It fails grievously at three points: first, in its insufficient insistence on the ethical life of man due to its attempted all-inclusive denial of the great facts of life or its impractical illusive teaching regarding a world beyond this world held in mystic obscurity; second, in its undervaluation of the individual will in man; third, in its consequent lack of a real vitality which to the popular mind has made it synonymous with death rather than life and having chief concern with the dead, not with the living.

Speaking positively, Professor Hino regards Christianity as the religion which can meet the pressure of twentieth-century life-problems. It has passed through local restrictions and racial limitations, and yet has vitality enough to maintain its main assertions. There is good in every religion. Christianity has demonstrated its powers of adaptation to new circumstances and of assimilation of new forces; it is not in its dotage; it is plastic and vigorous. Though

the task it faces is an enormous one, Christianity will win the hearts of the Japanese people. "The sound has its echo." It is the only religion that seems to have vitality enough to meet the spiritual needs of the present and coming generation. Ultimate victory is sure.

Shall China Have an Official Religion?

The *Chinese Recorder* reports a strong movement in Peking, supported in particular by influential literati, to procure the insertion in the new constitution now being framed of the words "Confucianism shall become the state religion of China while religious liberty shall be accorded to the people of China." In protest against this proposal, Taoists, Buddhists, and Mohammedans will stand with the Christians of China. The government cannot take this step and continue to treat other religions impartially. Already a committee has been organized in Peking to start a counter-movement.

An Eventful Year in New China

In the *Missionary Review of the World*, for October, 1913, Dr. A. H. Smith points out the political problems of the new republic and the opium question. The political situation is characterized by enthusiasm, expectation, indifference, and discontent. He is of the opinion that the political welfare of China depends on the united effort of the men of learning and capability for the upbuilding of the nation for the common good of the people. In addition to this political problem, China is engaged in a desperate struggle to stamp out her opium curse. In spite of some discouraging features of the problem, opium is increasingly put under ban.

The Future of Western Persia

In the *Moslem World* for October, 1913, Mr. G. G. Wilson of Tabriz, Persia, writes

of the significance for the spread of Christianity of "The Russian Occupation of Northern Persia" of which he anticipates no other outcome than a continued occupation and final annexation of Northern Persia by the Czar's government. Russian annexation means the dawn of a new day for the native Christian races of Persia, so cruelly harassed in the past by the Shahs. Their legal disabilities will end, the persecuting power of Islam will be curbed. Greater religious freedom will be allowed. The American, British, French, and German missions will be recognized and authorized, it is reasonable to expect, by the Russian government as an act of comity and friendliness to the governments under whose protection these missions are founded. The missionaries, on their part, will do well to adapt themselves to new conditions by adopting the Russian language as the basis of instruction. To quote a German delegate to the Edinburgh Conference, the Great Commission does not read: "Go ye into all the world and teach the English language."

What Missions Do to Religion

In the *London Quarterly Review* for October, Dr. George G. Findlay, writing of the Methodist Missionary Centenary, has this to say of the present-day situation in missions:

All history shows the religious bond to be vital to society. The Roman Empire instinctively sought a common faith, and found it in the debasing Caesar-worship; it adopted Christianity too late and too partially to save it. . . . India must be Christianized within the next century and qualified to take her place as a sister in the family of the British Empire, or she will rend herself from us by some new and bloodier mutiny. The world-society that is forming demands a world-religion: the one conceivable world-religion is that of Jesus Christ.

Dr. Findlay goes on to comment upon the influence of current religious thought upon the future of missions. It is less

dogmatic regarding the condition of those who live and die outside the pale of gospel faith. The science of comparative religion, largely created by missionary research, makes for tolerance and discrimination. It discovers testimonies to the one God and to the way of salvation revealed in Christ in creeds the most alien from our faith. The religion of Israel, as Dr. Moulton has shown in the Fernley Lecture, 1913, was never hermetically sealed against gentile thought. The interaction which took place between Judaism and Zoroastrianism and, at a later day, between Christianity and Hellenism is bound to take place also upon a growing scale between Christianity and Mohammedanism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and even fetishism and animism. The clearer recognition of the organic connection of Christ and Scripture with the whole life of mankind must in time to come profoundly affect the Christian propaganda.

The Opium Evil in India

In the October *London Quarterly Review*, Saint Nihal Singh states that there is no province in British India where the drug is not in common use, the consumption varying in different parts of the country from 18.7 pounds down to 4.1 pounds a year per thousand of population. While the increase in the population has been very gradual—7.1 per cent in the last decade—the consumption of opium has increased 182,557 pounds during this time. The greater part of the opium is taken in the form of pills and given freely to infants with their food to keep them quiet. According to evidence given before the Royal Commission on Opium which reported in 1895, in a single year 1,200,000 of these pills were manufactured. In some localities the opium habit is so common among women that at social functions boxes of the narcotic are handed around much as chocolates would be furnished by a European hostess. It is to be noted, however, that a very small

percentage of those who have to earn their daily bread by hard labor are addicted to the habit, the vice being indulged in as a rule by the wealthy and middle classes. Urban populations especially seem to be in the grip of the evil; 10 per cent of Calcutta's population are estimated victims; so also in Madras and other urban centers. Further, one-quarter or one-fifth of the adult population in Assam habitually use the drug. The baneful effects in the use of the drug are numerous and varied, but particularly destructive of the health and usefulness of children; much blindness is directly traceable to the opium habit. The moral contamination due to the use of opium is fully as evil as the physical degeneration attendant on its use—indolence, loss of power to concentrate or to make decisions, and the utter loss of any sense of duty, so that the word of an opium-user even under oath is positively worthless; in desperation he will commit any manner of crime in order to procure the drug. The smoking of opium is far more injurious in its results than its consumption in pill form.

In spite of the horrible results which invariably follow in the wake of the opium habit, there are even today many British officials—many of them doctors—who maintain that the employment of opium in small doses in a tropical country like Hindustan

does not produce the ill effects that follow its use in colder climates. The number of these would-be apologists is significantly highest in the worst districts. In spite of the drastic measures employed to stamp out the use of the noxious drug in other countries, the British Indian government still entertains notions as to the beneficent effects of opium. The revenue interests have overshadowed the moral issues. Of late, however, the British Indian administration has taken steps toward more stringent rules and regulations for opium consumption. On August 19, 1912, the Finance Department of the government of India approved resolutions called for a re-examination of the system of regulation in the light of the experience of other countries dealing with the same problem. To be sure that collective smoking has been interdicted, the price of the drug sold by the government has been raised so as to discourage its use, and the amount of opium which anyone may lawfully possess has been reduced, but far more rigorous action is necessary. In 1911-12 the revenue accruing to the government was £ 1,105,400; but it does not seem utopian to hope that the moral sense of the British Indian government will be quickened enough to forego this money consideration and free Hindustan from the ravages of the poppy.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

City Training Schools

The training of the Sunday-school teacher seems to be the focal point upon which the organized Sunday-school forces are wisely centering their energies. The superintendent of teacher training under the International Sunday-School Association, Dr. Franklin McElfresh, reports that city training schools for Sunday-school teachers are this year being organized in from twenty to thirty cities both east and west. Conspicuous among these cities are:

Hartford, Conn., Buffalo, N.Y., Cleveland, Ohio, Newark, N.J., St. Louis, Mo., Lincoln, Neb., and Kansas City, Mo. The programs of these schools vary considerably both in the quality of the courses offered and in their emphasis upon subject-matter, organization, and method. The movement in itself is wholly good, but we wish that we might see the biblical courses more adequately outlined and more conspicuously placed. But it is interesting to note that in the city institute which was organized